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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**SOMERS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT RECEIVES STATEWIDE AWARD
FOR HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS**

Superintendent of Public Instruction Denise Juneau recently visited Somers Elementary School District, which consists of Lakeside Elementary School and Somers Middle School, to present the Healthier Montana Menu Challenge Award for the schools' healthy school lunch program. Both schools celebrated with school assemblies and a special "Grown in Montana" lunch on October 27, 2010. Somers School District is one of only seven schools in the state that have received this prestigious award.

"Serving nutritious choices at school breakfast and lunch provides the brainpower students need for academic success while teaching them an important lifelong skill – learning to eat healthy" said Superintendent Denise Juneau.

According to District Superintendent Teri Wing, School Food Service Director Robin Vogler and her staff have made a significant contribution to the health and well-being of the student population. "We are extremely proud of our school food menus and the dedication of the staff toward the nutritional needs of our students."

The Healthier Montana Menu Challenge recognizes exceptional school meals programs. Somers School District successfully met a challenging set of menu criteria to qualify for the award. In doing so, both Lakeside Elementary and Somers Middle School are serving exceptionally healthy school lunch meals which contain colorful, fresh fruits and vegetables; whole grains; lean protein sources, including legumes, and low fat dairy products.

"I love getting kids excited about good food. Our students are very willing to try new things and give me feedback," Vogler said. "We're teaching healthy life habits and our students and staff are so enthusiastic- it makes our jobs fun."

Somers School District serves 100 breakfast meals and 375 lunches each day. The award-winning menu allows all students the choice of healthy options. Students in the district enjoy meals which are made from scratch, are eye-appealing, and delicious. A freshly prepared soup and salad choice is offered daily, in addition to the traditional hot lunch menu. Vogler said she makes it a priority to serve locally grown foods.

"The variety of foods offered at Somers Middle School allows students to choose foods based on their preferences. All students can be confident that they are receiving healthy

foods that will give them the energy to power through their day,” said Somers Middle School Principal Lori Schieffer.

For more information about the Healthier Montana Menu Challenge, please visit http://www.opi.mt.gov/Programs/SchoolPrograms/School_Nutrition/HealthyMT.html#goal_3.

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